

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT,FR.
SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN THE MOSELLE DEPARTMENT

1. MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN THE MOSELLE DEPARTMENT ARE EXPECTED TO SHOW IMPORTANT GAINS FOR THE LEFT, RESULTING IN AN INCREASED NUMBER OF SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IN THOSE COMMUNITIES WHERE THE VOTE MAY BE FOR INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES INSTEAD OF BLOCKED LISTS.

2. IN THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THE DEPARTMENT THE CRISIS IN THE BADLY DEPRESSED STEEL INDUSTRY FACING A MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WHICH WILL RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THOUSANDS OF JOBS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO GAINS BY THE LEFT. LOCAL POLITICS AND A SERIOUS SPLIT IN THE MAJORITY OCCASIONED BY THE UNPLEASANT FIGHT BETWEEN FORMER PRIME MINISTER MESSMER AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY JEAN JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF REGIONAL COUNCIL OF LORRAINE HAVE NOT HELPED THE MAJORITY.

3. IN METZ AND THIONVILLE, THE INCUMBENT MAYORS LACK THE SUPPORT OF THE LOCAL RPR, WHICH SUSPECTS THEM OF HAVING SUPPORTED JJ-SS FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CONSEIL REGIONAL IN JANUARY. IN THIONVILLE WHERE, CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, THE RPR SUPPORTS A YOUNG INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN DEPUTY, HENRI FERRETTI,
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AGAINST THE 73 YEAR OLD MAYOR, GEORGES DITSCH, THE CITY HALL MAY VERY WELL GO TO THE UNITED LEFT, LED BY A POPULAR LOCAL PHYSICIAN AND COMMUNIST, PAUL SOUFFRIN, WHO NARROWLY LOST THE ELECTION TO CONSEIL REGIONAL IN 1976. WHILE THE LEFT IS NOT EXPECTED TO TAKE MORE THAN 42 % OF VOTE ON THE FIRST ROUND, CRISIS IN THE STEEL INDUSTRY AND THE PERSONAL POPULARITY OF ITS LEADER MAY BE WINNING COMBINATION IN THE SECOND.

4. IN METZ, THE LARGEST CITY OF THE DEPARTMENT, THE INCUMBENT MAYOR, JEAN MARIE RAUSCH, WHO HAS A GOOD RECORD OF SOLID ACHIEVEMENT AND STRONG ADMINISTRATION, WILL PROBABLY HOLD OFF THE THREAT OF THE LEFT ON THE SECOND ROUND. WHILE THE RPR IS NOT OFFICIALLY ON HIS LIST, AND IN FACT, ON THE LOCAL SCENE, MAY BE TACITLY SUPPORTING HIS RIGHT OF CENTER OPPONENT, PIERRE BAUDOIN, WHOSE PRINCIPAL CLAIM TO FAME IS THAT HE LOST THE ELECTIONS IN 1965 AND 67, RAUSCH REMAINS THE ONLY OFFICIAL MAJORITY CANDIDATE. THE MAJORITY INCLUDING THE LOCAL RPR IS SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THE GRAVITY OF LOSING METZ THAT IT WILL MAKE THE NEEDED EFFORT TO SUPPORT RAUSCH ON THE SECOND ROUND AND ASSURE HIS RE-ELECTION. RAUSCH'S SOCIALIST OPPONENT PROFESSOR JEAN LAURIN, A MEMBER OF THE CONSEIL GENERAL, DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE ATTRACTED THE FOLLOWING IN THE USUALLY CONSERVATIVE CITY TO DEFEAT THE MAJORITY LIST.

5. NEVERTHELESS, IF THE LEFT, IN SPITE OF MANY INTERNAL DIVISIONS, SUCCEEDS AS IS GENERALLY EXPECTED IN TAKING AS MUCH AS 42 % OF THE VOTE IN METZ OR THIONVILLE IT WILL HAVE SCORED IMPRESSIVE GAINS BY COMPARISON TO 1971, WHERE IN METZ IT TOOK ONLY 19.1 % OF THE VOTE ON THE FIRST ROUND AND 15 % ON THE SECOND OR IN THIONVILLE WHERE IT LOST ON THE FIRST ROUND TAKING ONLY 31 % OF THE VOTE.ROMINE

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